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=THE COVER=

Gene Kelly and Tamara Toumanova in 'Ring Around the Rosy' from the MGM musical 'Invitation to the Dance'.

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BY AUBREY B. HAINES ~

GENE KELLY

• • • • • *Dancing Is His Life!*

"Every time Gene Kelly dances," Bob Hope once said, "Fred Astaire counts his money. To be sure, Astaire is in no danger, but the truth behind the remark implies that there is no apparent bottom to the pot of gold at the end of Gene's rainbow. Hard work and ingenuity made Kelly a dancer, a choreographer, and a motion picture actor, and these attributes still prod him on. Life has never been easy for him, but dancing is Gene Kelly's life.

An immediate hit in his first film role in 1942, Gene has received critical approval since then as a choreographer, a dramatic actor, and a singer. However, he is usually thought of as a dancer superior to others of his kind.

Born Eugene Joseph Kelly in Pittsburgh, August 23, 1912, he is one of five children. His father, Canadian born, was an executive with the Columbia Gramophone Company, while his mother had been on the stage as a young girl and even after her marriage continued her theatrical career with a Pittsburgh stock company. As a child Gene was given dancing lessons. A boy wearing a Buster Brown collar bound for dancing school is a natural target for the gibes of his contemporaries. But to ten-year-old Gene Kelly each taunt was a red flag. The boy began haunting vaudeville houses, studying every dancer who came to Pittsburgh. "The quickest way to learn is to watch someone who knows what he's doing," he used to say. Eventually Pittsburgh's Highland Park area rang with the sounds of Gene's battles-for-honor. In high school the lessons began to pay off. The youth walked away with the best parts in class plays. The prettiest girls clamored to dance with him at parties. And at Peabody High School he was a star halfback and played on the basketball and hockey teams.



Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse from the MGM Musical 'Brigadoon'.

Entering Pennsylvania State College after his graduation from Peabody, Gene had to return home when the depression affected his family's income. But soon he got a job teaching gymnastics at Camp Porter, a YMCA camp near Pittsburgh. By the next year, however, he was able to resume his education, this time at the University of Pittsburgh, where he majored in journalism. Working his way through school meant taking jobs as a ditch digger, concrete mixer, and carpenter's helper. All the while Gene continued to practice dance steps with his two brothers and two sisters. When his brother Fred learned that they could get engagements dancing in nearby night clubs, he and Gene turned to entertaining. "Fred and I used to do an act, tap dancing on roller skates," Gene recalls. "We made up two jokes, stole many more, and paired up as a team." Besides night club appearances the two brothers won many amateur contests, thus helping to maintain their family's income during the leanest years of the depression.

Already Gene's theatrical abilities were known on the campus, for the youth appeared in the annual Cap and Gown productions, which he directed in his senior year. Since a little ready cash was always useful, Kelly offered to teach dancing to his college friends for fifty cents an hour. "I took up ballet at eighteen," he recalls, "because when we started giving dancing lessons to others, we figured we ought to know something about what we were teaching." Before long the cellar of the Kelly home was turned into a dancing school. When that became overcrowded, the family rented a hall and opened the Gene Kelly Studios of the Dance. In 1933 Gene was graduated from the university and devoted his whole time to teaching. With his mother as director of the school the enterprise was so successful that a second one was soon opened in Johnstown, where Gene also taught tap dancing and ballet. During the summer the youth attended the Chicago meetings of the Dancing Masters Association. While in Chicago Gene also studied the dance and now claims that he read every book in the Chicago Public Library on the ballet, including those in French. When, after making such trips, his funds ran low, he took night club jobs dancing and doing what he calls "a beautifully corny master-of-ceremonies act." Although the Kelly schools made profits, within a few years Gene determined to better his chances in New York.

Leaving the schools in charge of his family, he tried Broadway in 1938, where at once he won a small dancing part in **Leave It To Me**. The next February the Nancy Hamilton production, **One for The Money**, opened with Kelly playing a dancing and singing role. After a season of summer stock performances at Westport, Connecticut, Gene was given a dancing and acting part in William Saroyan's **The Time of Your Life**, produced by Eddie Dowling and the Theatre Guild. The play, opening in the fall of 1939, ran for twenty-two weeks, won the Pulitzer Prize, and gave Kelly the opportunity to stage his own dances. Then came another pe-



Gene Kelly and his British dancing clowns. From MGM's *Invitation to the Dance*.

riod of summer stock roles before Gene was made dance director of Billy Rose's *Diamond Horseshoe*. Here he met Betsy Blair, a young chorus girl, whom he married in September, 1941. Thirteen months later a daughter, Kerry, was born.

Kelly's big chance in the theater came late in 1940, when he opened in the title role of **Pal Joey**, George Abbott's production of the John O'Hara stories. Playing opposite Vivienne Segal as the "heel-hero" of the musical comedy, Gene recalls that this part received laudatory reviews. Writing in the *New York Times* in a column devoted to a discussion of **Pal Joey**, John Martin labeled Kelly's work exceptional. "He is not only glib-footed, but he has a feeling for comment and content that both give his dancing personal distinction and raises it several notches as a theater art." Martin accurately predicted a Hollywood career for the Broadway dancer. Before going West, however, Gene turned to dance direction again, for another Abbott production, **Best Foot Forward**, which opened in October, 1941. An outstanding musical success of that season, the production as well as Kelly's dance routines received favorable press comment. Meanwhile Gene had been signed for films by David O. Selznick as a result of his **Pal Joey** role. Hence he and his wife headed for California via Mexico. But arriving in the film capital, they learned that Kelly's contract had been sold to Metro-Golowyn-Mayer, for whom he made his film debut in 1942 in a role reminiscent of **Pal Joey**.

Appearing with Judy Garland and George Murphy, Gene's first picture was **For Me and My Gal**. Strangely enough, however,

Kelly was determined not to be typed as a dancer in motion pictures. Hence he next played a smaller dramatic part in **Pilot Number Five**. In 1944 Columbia Pictures borrowed him for their Technicolor spectacle, **Cover Girl**, co-starring Rita Hayworth, for which Gene devised his own dances. "Few cinema actors can match his reticence, exact evocativeness, and sincerity, or carry such acting abilities into dancing and singing," one critic observed. Singled out for special attention was Kelly's "alter ego" dance. A New York **Herald Tribune** writer declared: "The human race has been having trouble with its conscience since time immemorial. It remained for Gene Kelly, however, to get his still, small voice out into the open and dance with it." Equally enthusiastic was the New York **Times** critic who wrote that "for once a dance on the screen is not merely a specialty but actually develops character and advances plot." This dance with his shadow, used by Gene to express a psychological struggle, involved many technical difficulties in sound, photography, and timing, for the two Kellys threatened each other, pursued each other up and down a flight of stairs, and leaped over each other's heads — all in perfect rhythm and synchronization. Labeled "a psychic tour de force," it drew from the **Hollywood Reporter** the comment that "nothing finer in the way of a dance routine has ever been filmed."

With Frank Sinatra and Kathryn Grayson, Gene starred in the musical film, **Anchors Aweigh**, in 1944, for which he was also dance director. Cast as a sailor in the Technicolor romantic comedy, Kelly tangoed with the leading lady, did a Mexican dance number with a seven-year-old child, a sailor routine with Sinatra, danced with an animated cartoon figure, and had a solo Spanish dance. His dancing, comedy talent, and singing were praised. To one critic his performance was "an absolute climax to the brilliant start he had made on a dancing career for the movies."

After seven months in the sailor role on the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot Gene entered the Navy in November, 1944, taking his training in San Diego. A lieutenant, junior grade, near the end of 1945 he was stationed in Washington, D. C., in the Naval Photographic Science Laboratory.

At last out of the service Kelly danced for the first time with Fred Astaire in the film, **Ziegfeld Follies**. Their number was a double tap sequence to George and Ira Gershwin's "The Babbitt and the Bromide," written originally for Astaire and his sister Adele in **Funny Face**.

It is clear that Gene Kelly shines brightest in creating and performing film dances. This involves no narrow range of activities, however. For screen dance, as Gene sees it, encompasses much more than the unadorned procedure of adding gestures together before a camera. It requires a knowledge of the workings and limitations of the camera itself a musical comprehension that can speak to composers in terms of rhythm, instrumentation, and mel-

odic line; a dramatic sense that can conceive and lay out the motivations for a dance so that it does not appear — as film dances too frequently do — like some irrelevant applique on the pattern of the story.

"It's really a matter," Gene suggests, "of fitting a three-dimensional art into a two-dimensional medium. And don't think it's easy. Everything works against me! On the stage I can walk around in rhythm for a minute or two, doing nothing but grin at the audience or wink at someone in the first row orchestra, and the crowd loves it. They eat it up. I know, because I've done it. But on the screen that sort of thing leaves the audience cold. The personality is missing. You've got to keep plugging, or before you realize it, your audience is out in the foyer eating popcorn.

"The camera is always making it impossible to do what I want to do. A dance should be performed the way the dancer feels it, and every time he must stop to move the camera around or to play a trick with the lens, he just isn't being honest. The best dance for the screen would be one that could be photographed headon by a stationary camera."

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Invitation to the Dance, which Gene directed, wrote and performed in -- made in 1952 but released within the past year or so -- was his pet project. A film dedicated to the dance, it played without any dialogue at all. Such motion picture experiments are all to the good, but in this inventive mood Kelly was expected to come forth with something more than the assortment of clichés which go to make up the three parts of his picture.

Gene limits himself to a trio of obvious stories told in pantomime. The first is that of a clown hopelessly in love with a ballerina, who loves a tightrope walker. The second is a rather labored account of a bracelet which passes from one set of lovers to another. And the third is a version of **Sinbad**, in which sailor Kelly clowns around with some cartoon characters.

Strangely enough, actual dancing in the picture is almost at a minimum. Only in two minutes or so with Igor Youskevitch and Claire Sombert in the first sequence does it even remotely qualify as ballet. The middle section seems to be a kind of test of telling a fairly simple story without dialogue and little dancing. And the last sequence, a good sample of cartoon and live character integration, is more of a technical accomplishment than anything else.

Unfortunately Gene's own choreographic talents appear too circumscribed to encompass what he had attempted to undertake. He would have improved the film if he had allowed a more experienced and versatile choreographer to assist. Though the film is a promising idea, it was executed without either imagination or courage.

Completed last year was **The Happy Road**, which he produced and co-directed as well as appeared in. At present Kelly is working at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer on **Les Girls**, to be released this year as a Cinemascope film. In recent years the dancing star has made a number of radio appearances on the Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby programs.

Known by those who work with him as a friendly and fun-loving person, the brown-eyed, black-haired dancer-actor, who stands five feet nine inches tall and weighs 150 pounds, is sometimes said to possess "an American baseball personality."

Today the dancing star lives in a comfortable but unpretentious Beverly Hills home, which he bought after his return from wartime service. Seldom does a Sunday go by without a crowd of friends gathering there for games of volleyball, followed by a raid on an always overloaded refrigerator and an evening of watching old movies. Gene is seldom seen at night clubs or at large Hollywood parties, preferring instead to entertain in his own home.

Known as one of the hardest working stars in Hollywood, he frequently puts in as many as sixteen hours a day on his film rehearsing, planning and performing. After working out ideas for his dances at home, he invariably spends two months rehearsing them at the studio for each picture. When the rare opportunity for a vacation arises, he likes best to spend it skiing, a sport in which he finds that he can forget the multiple demands of his career.

But Gene Kelly has a more reflective side to his personality, too. A survey of his large library reveals that his reading tastes lean toward contemporary biography, history, and economics. Nevertheless, his keen interest in politics and government caused him actively to support the late Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 1944 campaign. A member of the wartime Hollywood Victory Committee, Kelly reported on the need for regular hospital entertainment after a pioneering Army hospital tour. Thus he stimulated the organization of such an unit.

A loyal American in no flag-waving sense of the word, Gene Kelly believes in economic security for all, in tolerance, and in racial understanding. Indeed he is convinced that the actor and dancer should play his part as a citizen as well as a performer.

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San Francisco's history is remarkably marked by a continuous succession of dance events. This fact is remarkably essential because the population of San Francisco is completely unaware of the formative stress which dance has undergone during the years.

Whenever one speaks of the dance to a San Franciscan it is much like discussing the underground; no one knows much about it though everyone claims the whole subject is very fascinating. And, for this reason, dance in San Francisco has seemingly remained in the hands of a very few organizations which have made unprecedented promotional as well as artistic efforts to cause the public to become aware of their existence.

This impression of the existence of but two or three dance groups in this city is a very mistaken one. Particularly in recent years the surge of dance organization and the effort to expedite numerous plans have curiously increased. San Francisco, a city which imported art as it imported Italian marble in the fever of striking it rich, has gradually adjusted to its borrowed culture and has, in fact, commenced the work of creating

a native culture.

Dance was a social decoration in San Francisco in the 1800s, judging from records of that time. The ballet moistened the lips of ladies seeking pretty diversions. The very fact that Isadora Duncan grew up in San Francisco suggests that the city could manage a glimpse of the dance which saw more than the glimmer of niceties. And, it seems today, much of the quiet struggle for a regional dance idiom has grown out of a timid, often misguided but persistent effort to emerge with a vital and valid medium of movement.

Doubtlessly the fresh, vigorous works of the San Francisco Ballet Company have placed a great mark of achievement on the city's dance history — though much of its success sometimes appears to be borrowed from the eastern shores. So, too, during its reign, the Halprin-Lathrop Company not only succeeded in creating an impressive and highly original repertory of modern dance works, but also succeeded in training another generation of dancers which only recently has begun efforts on its own behalf. The Contemporary Dancers Foundation, in the past three years of existence, has supplied San Francisco with its controversial and strictly advance guard idiom.

However, aside from these organizations which have received the abundance of notoriety and publicity, there have been a good two dozen other groups or individuals functioning for many years in the dance field. An evaluation of the San Francisco dance world without the inclusion of these groups and persons would not make a very true picture. Because in their individual fashion these lesser known organizations have helped to formulate and realize the super-structure of dance on the

West Coast.

An evaluation of the artistic impulse of the dance is not entirely in order in our discussion. What seems most essential, no matter how often or how much I have previously criticized these groups, is that they are attempting in their own terms to fashion a form of dance which is for them pertinent and vital. That we cannot and therefore do not all take the impulse for our dance from the same source and with the same intention, is perhaps only a way of complimenting the West for its freedom from the schoolism of New York City.

I would not venture to say just how successful or important the works of these individual artists may prove to be. Their presence and persistence, however, in adding to the common wealth of the dance world in this area is of great importance. And surely they should be thanked abundantly for making a greater public more aware of a great art.

Through the years these artists have felt, I presume, the same urge to perform publicly that all performing artists feel. Their typical outlet for such feelings, however, has been in the unsatisfactory form of the annual student recital. Standing under a variety of banners the diverse dancers, working independently toward various goals, have presented themselves in a strangely mixed assortment of works.

Now, however, it appears that a great step forward has been taken. Under the power and invention of Carol Beals these dancers, who have added members to their group since the last appearance, have created a brief series of dance performances under the title of "Choreographer's Show Case". Presenting four different programs in June, the published

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aim of the series was essentially to air the works of new and old choreographers of San Francisco who have not previously had a sufficient audience.

The group is to be complimented for the manner in which they have used every resource for bridging the indifference of the public to the dance in their tasteful and successful promotional efforts. The director of the San Francisco Opera Ring, where the performances took place, is to be thanked for her interest in the dance. And this department can only hope that the venture was able to fulfill the aims

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the DANCE in NEW YORK

R. HASOUTRA

THE AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE and BALLET THEATRE WORKSHOP

The most exciting event of the month was the Ballet Theatre's highly important experiment at the Phoenix Theater. On four successive Mondays, programs of new ballets by new choreographers were presented with a minimum of costuming and settings and a maximum of talent, the aim being to try out new works before an audience in order to find the most suitable ballets for the company's repertoire. Those chosen will then be richly costumed, set and polished for the new season. Fifteen new ballets by fourteen choreographers were presented at these four previews which, by request, may not be reviewed at present. Lucia Chas and Oliver Smith, co-directors of the company, will announce the result of this experiment in the near future and this should be of highest interest to every dance group, large and small.

In these days of increasing costs, it is a staggering undertaking to fully produce even one ballet and this, no matter how brilliant it seems to those involved, may be but a pale glow to the audience. Only with long experience can a choreographer develop judgment in this respect — but he can never be sure. How intelligent it is, then, to try out new works before the money is all spent on a failure and if it holds up in the raw state, how confidently it can be richly dressed and set for the assured success at the real presentation. For the soloist doing her own choreography — previews could be just as important as for a company.

CONTEMPORARY DANCE PRODUCTIONS, YMHA CONCERT HALL

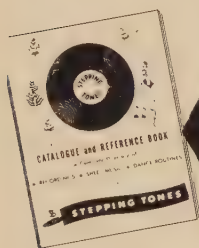
The second program given this season by the Contemporary Dance Group was more interesting as a whole and better presented than the February showing — though the latter did launch Melissa Nicolaides and Jeff Duncan as two very definite choreographic talents.

This program brought two new works by Miss Nicolaides: "Cycle," danced by herself with Margie Beals and Rima Berg, and her solo: "After Winter," to music by J. S. Bach. "Cycle" to music by Peggy Glanville-Hicks, is a well constructed Trio of good flowing movement with a strange emotional quality hovering over it, almost Borgia-like with its dark, smouldering aggressions which

break out in flashes of conflict. It was too long and the second, quieter part, needs strengthening but it is a good work, danced beautifully. "After Winter" gave full scope to Miss Nicoladies' exquisite style of movement, building dynamically from the heaviness of Winter to the last glorious leap toward Spring. While neither of these works reached quite the perfection of her "Three Rhapsodies," seen in February, Miss Nicolaides more than sustains the promise and hopes her first works inspired.

William Hug's "Conversations," to music by Corelli-Barbirolli, danced by himself and a group of eight, is a very charming "Talkie" dealing with Friendly Talk, Questioning Talk, Big Talk and Gossip. It was a delight to see how clearly and neatly each kind of talk — and the emotional color of each — was expressed by good imaginative movements. "Rhythm Ritual," which Mr. Hug danced with two girls, is a clever, fascinating Trio in which the dancers supply their own music by slapping arms, hands, thighs, even the air and the floor, as they progress through interesting and sometimes brilliant choreographic patterns. "Regulations," to percussion played by Mr. Hug, was in two parts: "Smoking Is Not Permitted" (which did not fare too well) and "Occupancy By More Than One Is Dangerous and Unlawful." Since the position to be occupied was the top rung of a ladder, perched precariously on a wobbly table, no one with any wits would want to break the Regulation — but there are compulsive rebels against all laws — and to watch the group rebelling was great fun. Mr. Hug is a clever, creative choreographer with a fine talent for humor, clarity and excellent timing.

Irene Dahl's "Theme and Variations", to music by Ernest Bloch, admirably danced by herself and a well trained group of



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six, was pleasant but not at all unusual. Miss Dahl's solo, however, was charming. "He Said, She Said," to Scarlotti's music, was the delightful reverie of a medieval maid in flowing gown and crisp wimple, imagining a conversation with her Knight and cavorting, fetchingly, before him. There was a tender blend of pathos and humor in this timeless practice of one in love.

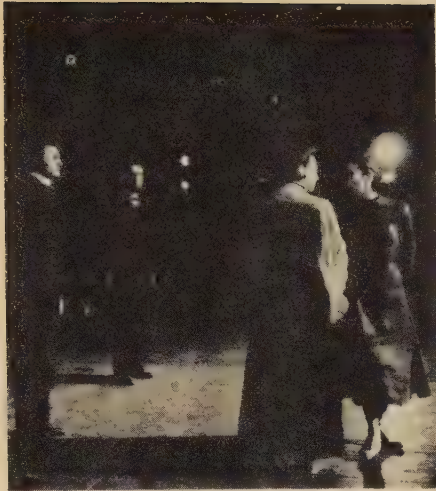
Audrey Bookspan gave three very interesting and widely varied works. "Legend" (John Henry) to American folk tunes, is always thrilling to see. This powerful struggle of the downtrodden reaching for a place in the sun -- for freedom -- is one of Miss Bookspan's finest works. "Sonata for Springtime" is a new work, to music by Vivaldi-Respighi, in three parts: I Myself -- You and Me -- We Together. It is a pleasant, sprightly breath of youth well constructed and beautifully danced by the choreographer and Vivienne Blanc. But it was her "Invitations To The Dance" that was the hit of the evening. Styled: Prophetic, Esthetic, Non-Esthetic, Athletic (to music by Paul Bowles) -- four moods of dance are spoofed in good rough mugging comedy underlined by amazing technical strength and frequent flashes of real wit. Miss Bookspan has an excellent sense of dramatic projection and a powerful technique.

The two numbers choreographed and danced by Durevol Quitzow (with Diane Quitzow and William Hug) had a unique flavor and were of fine quality. "Flowers, Trains, Trunks and Things", to the accompaniment of Train Sounds from offstage, was a purposely zaney brew of mores, moods and mirth. It would have been perfect had the mores and moods not grown a bit heavy for the mirth, but not too heavy, for it was delightfully clever humor. In "Shades of Eros," Diane and Durevol Quitzow sustained a lovely lyric sense of unity between lovers even though impelled by a rather odd looking golden ball -- representing the influence of the planets on human affairs. The Quitzows are excellent dancers, full of imaginative invention. Obviously they were reaching for something which, if found, might be magnificent. They only just missed this but what they gave was praiseworthy.

The Contemporary Dance Company can be proud of the excellent contributions it has given Dance this year.

**JOSE GRECO & COMPANY,
PLAYHOUSE THEATRE, NYC**

After Mr. Greco's very successful appearance at the Brooklyn Academy of Music this Spring (see review in March issue) he has returned to New York for a three week run on Broadway. The program was much the same as seen in Brooklyn but it has been pruned and polished, the order of numbers was greatly improved, the company was in tip top shape and Mr. Greco never danced better. It was a slick, fast-moving performance and proved that Mr. Greco's showmanship is flexible and unerring.



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**ANNE WILSON,
CARNEGIE RECITAL HALL**

Le Cercle Artistique Francoise presented a program of music and dance at its Annual Soiree. "Les Noces de Jeanette," a nineteenth century operetta by Victor Mosse, was pretty grim but Anne Wilson was charming in a classical ballet, "Les Korriganes," a version of La Sylphide, to music by Widor, first seen in Paris circa 1880. Mme. Olga Tarassova re-choreographed it for Miss Wilson, who is a lovely dancer. Robert St. Clair was an admirable partner.

**ROBERT IGLESIAS & COMPANY,
CARNEGIE HALL**

Once in a while an artist comes along who seems just right in everything he does and when his company keeps pace with him, it is a memorable occasion. Such was Roberto Iglesias' performance at Carnegie Hall. A few years ago he was here with Rosario & Antonio and was outstanding, in spite of small opportunity, but now with his own company he is magnificent. Tall,



Melisa Nicolaides with Patricia Christopher and Anna Friedland in 'King's Heart'.
—W.H. Stephan

handsome, virile, he is bubbling over with warmth and an almost peasant-like, good natured simplicity, yet every moment the powerful leader. Technically he is in command of ballet and modern as well as his native Spanish forms and his style is an original blend of these. He is the best choreographer in Spanish form I've seen to date.

Many of his tales are frankly folklore, such as "Fiesta En Les Islas" from the Canary Islands, arranged with taste and great charm for the group. Two were based on poems by Garcia-Lorca: "Zorongo-Gitana," danced brilliantly by Iglesias with Esperanza Galan, and "Soledad," a fascinating Seguiriyas which he danced with Rosario Galan. "Idolos De Arena," showing the swagger, pride, fear and tragedy of a bullfighter's life, was danced magnificently by Roberto Iglesias and four men. It is a masterpiece which packs the whole of Ibanez' "Blood and Sand" into a few powerful moments.

In complete contrast - still with great skill - Iglesias brought down the house with his solo, "Alegrias" and "Point and Heel," a Zapateado, danced superbly by him and Aida Ramirez (who is a real beauty).

The closing "Duende Y Solera," in three movements, is a beautifully built and exciting finale --- led by Iglesias and Lupe Garcia (a dynamic, brilliant dancer). The public would not go home, so the company generously gave encore after encore, each new and amusing, with Roberto Iglesias presiding as a warm, genial host. It was a wonderful, thrilling evening.

**MARIA MARCHOWSKY,
YMHA CONCERT HALL**

Miss Marchowsky's performance was one of the happier events at the YMHA this season. She is a lovely dancer, projects

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clearly the mood inherent in her movements and has great versatility and humor. Her choreography for herself is excellent and for group work, although not always in hand, shows great promise and even now is far better than much seen here and there.

"Three Amiable Foibles: The Inept One, The Sentimental One, The Bored and Restless One," to music by Paul Bowles, was a rare gem. To be really funny and sustain it long enough to complete a statement is the most difficult task in the theater. Miss Marchowsky succeeds in doing this, I believe, because she maintains the movements that would be done in a serious characterization and the comedy grows out of timely highlighting and exaggerations. In "Two Portraits," she depicted an Odelisque bored with harem life and a figure after Toulouse-Lautrec, clearly and brilliantly projected.

"Arena" is a dramatic tale of an Inquisitor (Sheldon Ossosky) condemning to death the Victim (M. Marchowsky) with a funeral Cortege solemnly danced by Fritz Hess, to his own drumbeats. It had moments of dramatic beauty but also lapses of clarity and intensity. Miss Marchowsky, however, was excellent, particularly in the death scene. "Camera's Eye" is a series of pictures: "Long Shot, Candid Shot," etc., flashes of moods among teen-agers. With a small flight of stairs and a tablelike platform, the choreographic pattern passed from one level to another in a fine flow of movement, at times strikingly beautiful. The young, well trained group danced it admirably with Maria Marchowsky and Sheldon Ossosky.

THE NEW YORK BALLET CLUB, 6th ANNUAL CHOREOGRAPHERS NIGHT FASHION INDUSTRY AUDITORIUM

Every year the Ballet Club presents a program of new works by young choreographers. This year six were represented: Louis Johnson, Ilona Aron, Joseph Rosen, David Vaughn, Molly Vicks and Nels Jorgensen.

Mr. Johnson's "Folk Impressions" was easily the most successful, even though the group needed more work and the whole piece was too long. Listed as a "Ballet in Five Parts: Proclamation, Sermon, A Little Bit of Sin, Short'nin' Bread, Protest, Jubilee," to folk tunes very cleverly arranged by Morton Gould, it was a clear and emotionally valid mirroring of highlights on important events in a small Southern town. Theodore Duncan danced very well the agile, dedicated Parson who, through "Proclamation" and "Sermon" led his little flock. Thelma Hill was convincing as the girl who couldn't resist a "Little Bit of Sin," and the menace of the group attacking her in "Protest" really reached top dramatic effect. Through the gentle guidance of the Parson and thoughts of "Short'nin' Bread," the "flock" burst into a brilliant "Jubilee" — and a good time was had by all, particularly the audience. It is not a great work, the theme is not new, to say the



Sonia Arova in 'Les Sylphides'.



Jose Greco at Brooklyn Academy
of Music. W.H. Stephan—

least, but Mr. Johnson's choreography has a deep, earthy, organic flow imbued with emotional life.

David Vaughn's "Tales From Mother Goose" to Ravel's music was a lost cause from the beginning. Wakefield Poole as Price was a lost cause from the beginning. Wakefield Poole as Prince suggested an ability that was not utilized and Bernard Johnson made a noble effort to make something of Hop o' My Thumb but the Empress of the Pagodas, the Beauty and the Beast and even the Sleeping Beauty were dull, both in choreographic concept and dance performance.

Nels Jorgensen's first effort at choreography, "Pas de Trois de Plaisir," to music by Britten-Rossini, had a simple, pleasant theme of playing follow-the-leader. It was fresh, spontaneous, interesting at first, but he said all he had to say in the first three minutes; thereafter the redundancy permitted us to realize how sloppy much of the dancing was.

Molly Vicks presented "Mobile" to music by Gershwin. With a large geometric figure hanging heavily over them, three dancers went through choreographic figures as unrelated to the flow of dance as the fixture was to mobility.

Ilona Aron, from Israel, presented her first choreographic work, "Dilemma," to music by Paul Creston, styled on the program as "Youthful Storms of Love" with Tomoji Shakunta as the Girl, Dick Rutherford as the Boy, and Conflicting Emotions danced by Dolores Coray and Mary Stone. None of it added up to the

BALLET CIRCLE WINS PRAISE

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REVIEWED by
MARJORIE WEBER

Dancers from the East Bay Civic Ballet, whose formation was described in the October, 1956, issue of **Dance Digest**, presented two ballets at the Berkeley Little Theater, Berkeley, California, recently to a receptive and appreciative audience.

A nice blending of the romantic and classical ballet styles was evidenced by the five soloists who took part in the performance. Under the skillful direction of Director Jan Carpenter the dancers performed both the romantic choreography of "Songs Without Words" and the severely classical "Tchaikowsky Divertissements," giving proper balance and nuances of interpretation to each. Not only does the company possess a fine sense of period style, but execution is fluent and highly proficient in each member of the group.



Jan Carpenter, Director of the Ballet Circle Workshop, Berkeley, California.

Michel Panaiëff's version of the famous "Pas De Quatre," which he calls "Songs Without Words," was a lyrical evocation of the Mendelssohn music which inspired its creation. In addition to choreographic charm it presented each dancer with an opportunity to display her talent and win the audience. Notable in this contest was Geraldine

choreographer's commitment by choice of title — but Miss Shunkta is a beautiful dancer, utterly pleasing, in spite of the confused context.

Joseph Rosen's "Pas de Trois" to music by Lortzing, could have been a triumph, for it had the merit of really first class dancing by Natalia Grishin, Melinda Plank and Don Farnworth. Style, speed, interesting figures, fireworks — all were there — but too much of it . . . like the woman who clanks about wearing all of her jewelry at once just because she has it, Mr. Rosen doesn't know when to stop, either. If a little is good, a lot is not necessarily better. But Mr. Rosen is not alone for every piece on the program was too long for what it had to say.

Uhlig, former Ballet Celeste principal, who delighted with her gay vivacity and warmth of expression. Wendy Brophy was light and airy as thistledown in her variation. Carol Dampier was herself a beautiful Fanny Cerrito, and Barbara Crockett, guest dancer from the Sacramento Ballet, gave an expert reading of the Taglioni role. All combined to give life and charm to Chalon's lithograph for the interval between the first and final tableau of the ballet.

The four dancers were joined by Robert Ronan, late of Alicia Alonso's company, in the "Diversissements," composed of excerpts from famous T'schaikowsky ballets. Here, in elegant royal blue velvet tutus and glittering sequins against a simple neo-classic setting, the dancers again gave an expert account of themselves in the choreography of Deane Crockett and Marius Petipa.

Much credit for the high standard of this young company is due Jan Carpenter, herself a ballerina, who insists that every last detail of production be right before presenting the company to the public. Although Ballet Circle, the East

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an informal interview with

LEW SERBIN

The following is an interview with Lew Serbin, proprietor of Dance Art Company in San Francisco. Mr. Serbin recently returned from a four-month tour of the world in search of the unique wares that have, over the years, made his store a haven for shoppers in search of theatrical, decorative and dance items from far off places.

- Q. Mr. Serbin, on your recent around-the-world trip did you observe any unusual conditions or trends which might be of interest to the dance profession?**
- A.** To me, one of the most interesting sidelights was my discovery that dancing is far wider patronized throughout Europe than it is in our country. An even more interesting observation insofar as Ballroom dancing goes, is the fact that the Cha Cha Cha and Rock and Roll have supplanted all the popular dances that were formerly characteristic of the various nations. For example, I found little or no Waltzing in Austria; they were too busy doing Rock and Roll. The same goes for Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and other countries. These countries used to be conservative countries; now they have become steeped in Rock and Roll.
- Q. How did you find their dance bands as compared to ours in this country?**
- A.** I would say they compare favorably with our second-rate jazz orchestras. Some might even be said to be better. To say the least, everyone seemed to be enjoying the new dance forms. As a matter of fact the majority seemed to enjoy the Cha Cha Cha and Rock and Roll far more than they did their own native dances.
- Q. What do you think has brought about this extreme taste in dancing and music, Mr. Serbin?**
- A.** I believe the United States with its numerous military installations throughout the world has had a great measure of influence in bringing about these changes in taste. Obviously with the thousands of young GIs spread over the world some of our customs are bound to rub off on those we come in contact with. Another powerful influence are the motion pictures,



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Q. What about theatres?

A. There are no theatres in the Middle East, such as we know them. They have what we call theatre cafes where entertainers perform on stage, but no public dancing is allowed. Only in the westernized types of cabarets is dancing practiced. Of course, there are the private affairs where mostly the privileged classes dance but there are no such things as dance halls. One interesting factor I noticed at these westernized night clubs was that the ages of those attending ranged from about twelve to thirty. Of course they don't serve liquor at these places.

Q. They don't serve liquor?

A. No. Those adhering to their faith do not indulge in alcoholic beverages. It is a violation of their faith. In fact, the only drunkenness you'll ever see in the Middle East is by foreigners, and mostly Americans. Possibly this is because they have the most money, and are best able to travel. You might also find this an interesting sidelight: While in Calcutta I stopped at an ice cream parlor which employed a jazz combo with an American girl singer. The entire place was having a gay time, just listening and stomping to Rock and Roll rhythms. The entire audience, aside from myself, was made up of native Hindus.

Q. You must have observed a number of changes in dance and music trends since you last toured these countries, Mr. Serbin?

A. That's right. On my previous trip I found the natives of these countries enjoying Foxtrots, Waltzes and a bit of modified Swing. Now, if you did not see the faces of these teen-agers while they were dancing, you'd think they were American boys and girls. They even go for the Elvis Presley movies. And in the Middle East whenever a Presley picture plays, lines form early in the day at the picture house. Probably the most financially successful picture shown to teen-agers so far was a picture called "Rock and Roll" which played some months ago in the United States.

Q. What about ballroom dancing in Japan? Has it changed, too?

A. Japan has gone practically crazy over Rock and Roll. Japan has perhaps a thousand night clubs, and they all seem to be doing a tremendous business. The more exclusive places are patronized by Americans because the average Japanese can't afford them. Here again, you will find the patrons ranging from very young to older. There seems to be no age minimum. I observed girls who appeared to be no more than twelve years of age on the floor.

Q. How did you find the behavior patterns of the teen-agers in these various countries?

A. Their behavior appeared to be very good. Regardless of the extremes they might go to in their dancing, their behavior was very circumspect. I saw almost no smoking among them. However, many writers in these countries are concerned over this Rock and Roll influence from America. They feel that it has caused serious inroads into their own culture, and this they resent. Obviously, they don't like to see their own cultures and their own folk ways dying out, or being supplanted by foreign influences, particularly with such influences as Rock and Roll.

Q. Getting back to show business, did you see any signs of vaudeville such as we used to know it in this country?

A. No. There is very little of variety, other than what you find in night clubs. The clubs have supplanted the vaudeville theatre. All through Europe, though, the shows in the night clubs are more elaborate than even the big New York musicals.

Q. What about the typical line of chorus girls? Do you find them also in these countries?

A. Yes. For example, in Tokyo in one theatre there are two hundred dancers. They have a precision tiller line of ninety-six

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girls. They also have a corps de ballet of around forty or fifty.

Q. What is the name of this particular club?

A. The Nikocheki in Tokyo. There are more than three hundred people in some of the ensemble scenes on the stage at one time. There are at least thirty scenic changes during one two-hour production. To my mind this night club is rivaled only by the Casino de Paree in Paris.

Q. How does the dancer's compensation compare with that of the U. S.?

A. First of all they attend the schools that are run by the particular theatres and upon graduation they are guaranteed a steady job. In the course of their development they can move into higher brackets. The system is copied from the Russian system, with the exception that it is not subsidized by the state as it is in the Soviet Union.

Q. Are these dance students permitted to leave and take employment elsewhere?

A. No. They are required to devote a given amount of years to the particular theatre that has trained them, in return for



"Oh Marjie, we've finished twirling.... Marjie?.."

their training. That is the only way the operators of these enterprises have of getting a fair return on their investment. After all, these students are given food and lodging as well as their training until they are competent performers. I'm not sure as to the exact details in this respect, but I believe it is around five years that they must remain after they are trained.

Q. Are there also independent dance schools such as we have over here?

A. Yes, there are many. In fact, the majority of the dance schools are operated by Americans. They teach everything from Tap and Ballroom to Ballet. There are quite a number of White Russians who conduct ballet schools. Many of these emigrated to the Orient after the Revolution and later, when China went Communistic, many emigrated to Japan. Incidentally, the ballet dancers that I saw in many of the night clubs of Japan were on a par with what I've seen in this country.

Q. I noticed that the back of your store is literally covered with all types of dance dolls. Is there a story behind them, Mr. Serbin?

A. These dolls are made in Madrid by a very famous artist named Rolden. He has caught in his imagination the spirit, the fire and the beauty of the Spanish dance in all its forms, from the Gypsy, the Flamenco to the more classical forms of the Spanish dances, and has incorporated it into these exquisite dance dolls that you see here. You can see, they are all beautifully costumed, and are made completely by hand.

- Q. I don't recall having seen anything quite like them. Are they new to this country?**
- A.** I have the exclusive representation for the West Coast of this line. It takes approximately five months to get them from Spain as they are made on special order. What you see here is only a small part of what we have in stock at the moment. There are Can Can dolls, Gypsy, Strut, Ballet, almost every conceivable type of dance doll anyone would want.
- Q. If any of our readers are interested in more specific details regarding these dolls, I presume you would be happy to have them write you?**
- A.** Yes, we are always happy to hear from people on any subject, any time. I'd also like to mention that we were fortunate in obtaining Indian dance bells, an item that for the past number of years has been almost impossible to get. We have some 100,000 on the way to us.
- Q. Mr. Serbin, I've noticed over the years that every so often you seem to literally pull stakes and are gone for several months at a time. Just what is it that motivates these round-the-world jaunts?**
- A.** Basically, my reason for these trips, aside from the adventure aspect, is to be able to introduce into our service to the dance and allied professions, materials and decorative items not available, to my knowledge, from any other source. Because of these extensive travels I have acquired somewhat of a reputation for stocking things that are novel and original. To mention only a few items garnered from my trip there are authentic head dresses from Bali, fine castanets from Spain as well as hand-made tambourines which we sell for the same price as those made in this country by machines. We have also been able to obtain genuine Batik from Bali which is very desirable for those doing authentic character dancing. I've also imported a tremendous variety of grotesque masks and novelty headgear from all over the world.
- Q. In other words, your satisfaction comes not only from the sheer thrill of adventure, but in being able to supply your patrons with the unusual, the bizarre and the hard to obtain items necessary to the theatrical profession?**
- A.** That's just about right, for after some thirty years in this business my customers have come to expect such things from my establishment.
-

Teachers' and Students'

section

RECITAL TIME

The Bessie Clark Dance Studio of San Jose presented its 14th Annual Dance Recital at the Montgomery Theatre on May 31st and June 1st.

The Los Ayres Dancers presented 'Varieties of 1957' June 16th at the Fremont High School Auditorium in Oakland.

Dorothy Roberts presented her 'Stars of Tomorrow' in a revue titled 'A Trip Through the U.S.A. Alaska and Honolulu'.

Du Mont Studios of Oakland presented 'Du Mont Varieties' June 9th at the Richmond Auditorium.

The Yvonne School of Dancing of Berkeley presented 'The Rhythm Revue of 1957' on May 19th.

The Ione Davis Dance Studio held its annual recital in San Lorenzo on May 25th.

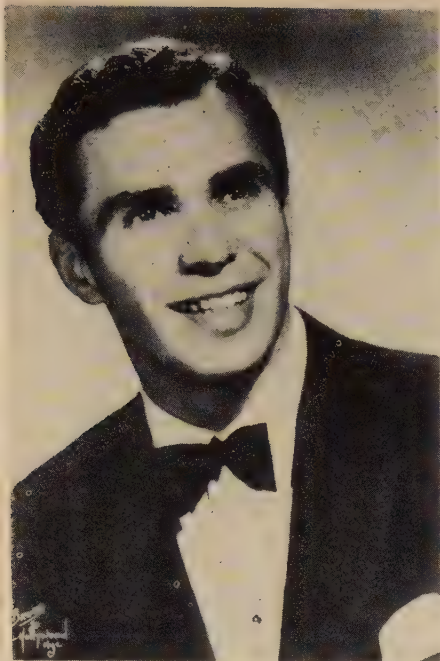
The Luva Stratton Ballet School of San Jose held its annual Dance Recital at the Montgomery Theatre on June 18th.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

DANCING STAR Magazine is not published during August. The next issue will be dated Aug.-Sept. and will be out the early part of September.

NOTICE TO CONVENTION PUBLICITY DIRECTORS:

You are welcome to send us news and photos of your own organization's activities this past summer. It goes without saying—if we don't receive the material, we can't print it.



Pictured above is Don Casanave, up and coming young singing star whose new recording 'Deep Within Me' and 'Outside My Dream World' has just been released by ABC-Paramount. Don has been getting rave reviews wherever his record is played. Young Casanave is the son of C.L. Casanave, Sr., who, with Fred Astaire, heads the Fred Astaire Dance Studios.

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DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

YOU ARE WELCOME TO SEND NEWS OF YOUR ASSOCIATION TO THIS COLUMN

CECCHETTI COUNCIL of AMERICA will again present an all Ballet Seminar in Detroit, July 20th to July 26th at Park Shelton Hotel. Graded material will be given by members of the executive board which includes: Jack Bickle, Olga Fricker, Sylvia Hamer, Marjorie Massard, Gertrude Edwards Jory, Leona Lucas, Jane Caryl Miller, Chula Morrow, Enid Ricardeau, Virgiline Simmons, Theodore J. Smith, Irene Mortensen and Ruth Carney. Guest teachers include: William Dollar, Celia Franca and Nadia Chilkovsky. Subjects which they will teach include: Variations, Technique, Children's Material, Mime and Labanotation. There will also be classes in Music Theory, Costuming and Make-Up.

CHICAGO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of DANCE MASTERS held an all-day meeting April 7th at the Sherman Hotel in Chicago. Faculty teachers included: Leon Palmisano, Modern Jazz; Janie Newcome, Children's Dances; Jack Wolf-ram, Tap; Berenice Holmes, Ballet; Arthur Knapp, Ballroom; and Grace V. Hanson, Ballroom Calypso. **WANTED:** Music and lyrics for a song that will be our Official Song. It should be included in our brochure.

DANCE MASTERS of CALIFORNIA held a meeting May 5th at the newly decorated Mason-Kahn Studios in San Francisco. Instruction included: Tap, Barbara Keith; Children's Ballet, Carole Singer; Modern Jazz & Primitive, Elna Laun (guest teacher) and Calypso, Imogene Woodruff. Ellen Taylor's student, Becky Dali is in Hollywood making movies with the Mickey Mouse Club.

ASSOCIATED DANCE TEACHERS of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA held a meeting June 9th at the Hotel Statler in Los Angeles. Faculty teachers included: Sussette Lane, Ballroom Swing; Mildred Conn, Mambo & Tango; Marie Bryant, Lyrical Jazz & Modern Primitive, and Mona Frances, Ballet. George Reeder, now with the 'Li'l Abner' show in New York, is a pupil of Dorothy Williams and Eugene Loring.

BALLROOM ENTHUSIASTS PLEASE NOTE

If you have any NEWS, PHOTOS or QUESTIONS please send them to: William D'Albrow, 1616 California St., San Francisco, Calif. Anything acceptable to the editors will be published in Dance Digest magazine.

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DANCE DIGEST Magazine

**376 Almaden Avenue
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NEWS BRIEFS

★ ★ The Smith Bene School of Dance presented their pupils in a program of Dance and Song, May 26th at the George Gershwin Theatre in Brooklyn College. Miss Bene danced the Grand Pas de Deux from Nutcracker with her guest artist partner, Rex Devore, as well as dancing her own interpretation of the classical 'Dying Swan'. Miss Bene will also teach for the fifth consecutive year at Teachers' Conservatories which are held from coast to coast this summer.

★ ★ Eric Hawkins is now conducting special sessions this summer in Modern Dance for both the professional and layman in his studios at 66-5th Ave. New York City.

★ ★ Meriam Marmein will conduct the Marmein Summer Dance Pantomime Theatre Studio, June through August, at Manomet, Mass.

★ ★ The Mason-Kahn Dance Studios of San Francisco held a special session in American Jazz which began June 17 and will run for six weeks. Elna Laun is conducting the class.

★ ★ A drive to raise \$50,000 for the San Francisco Ballet in an effort to extend its concert season as well as to put it on a firm financial foundation has been launched by a special finance committee of the Ballet Guild. Heading the committee are H.Z. Zellerbach and Mrs. J.F. Sullivan, Jr. The campaign's goal is to give the ballet similar status as that presently enjoyed by the San Francisco Opera and Symphony. This would give San Francisco the only major ballet company west of New York.

★ ★ The 7th Annual Woodminister Light Opera Season opens July 12th with Finian's Rainbow, followed by The Merry Widow, August 9th and The New Moon, September, 13th. For additional information write to: John M. Falls, 3300 Joaquin Miller Rd., Oakland 2, Calif.



Left to right: Margo Nelson and Debbie Margolin (A & L Theatrical of Oakland) two dancers who performed a featured number in Lorna Fordyce's 'Variety Revue' which was held at the Veteran's War Memorial Auditorium on June 18th in San Francisco.

—Bill Cogan

★ ★ Dorothy Lee Tifal, director of the Ruth St. Denis Studio of Ethnic Dance in Hollywood, is conducting a two-week course in native dances and techniques of India and Japan at the Reno Ballet Arts Academy in Reno, Nevada.

★ ★ This year marks the 10th season of the Connecticut College School of the Dance. The American Dance Festival will be held Aug. 15th thru the 18th at New London, Connecticut.

★ ★ Merce Cunningham will be guest instructor at the Idyllwild Dance Workshop this summer. Plans are under way for the Cunningham Company to tour New England this winter, and a Western tour is in the offing for Spring, 1958. Mr. Cunningham has been engaged as a guest instructor at the Welland-Lathrop Dance School for one week begin-

ning July 15th. He has also been invited by Anne Halprin to perform on her famed 'Dance Deck' in Marin County, California. (Designed by her architect-husband, Lawrence Halprin, this Dance Deck recently featured in 'Architectural Forum' (March 1957), presents a new concept in space for dancing.)

★ ★ The Raoul Pause Ballet in Oakland, Calif., presented three dances from 'The Bartered Bride' in conjunction with the Young People's Symphony Orchestra, May 24th at the Berkeley High School.

★ ★ Leticia Jay (Dance Notation) will present four dances and a lecture-demonstration of the system at the Normal School and Convention at the Chicago National Association of Dance Masters. During the American Society of Teachers of Dancing Convention Miss Jay will demonstrate a dance in Jay Notation.

★ ★ The Dance Art Studio in San Jose held a 'Starlet Dancerama' for the benefit of the crippled children's summer camp fund on May 19th at the Montgomery theatre.

★ ★ Gladys Hight and her faculty teacher, Violet Strandz, will teach at the C. N.A.D.M. this summer. Following her regular Summer Course, Miss Hight will take a group of her teenagers to New York where they will study at the Ballet Theatre School, sightsee and attend musicals.

★ ★ Pupils of the Patrice Dorene Nissen studio in Concord, Calif., are taking the Royal Academy Ballet Education examinations. Those taking part in the examinations include: Rowena Roubles, Sandy Roubles, Carole Davis, Holley Reyes and Helen Rose.

★ ★ The Bev-El Studio of Theatre Arts had its grand opening at 4116 MacArthur Blvd. on May 26th in Oakland.



Phyllis Greer, associate teacher at the Du Mont Studios in Albany, California.
—Henry V. Hilderbrand

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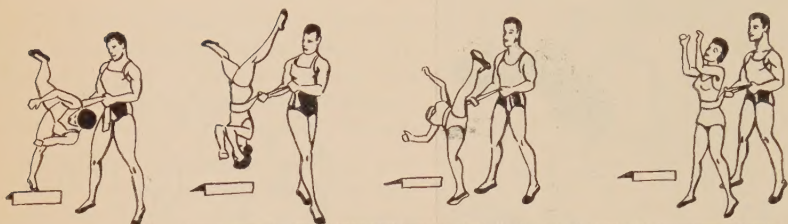
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'Good heavens, Arthur, you've certainly lost a lot of hair since the last time we danced together!'

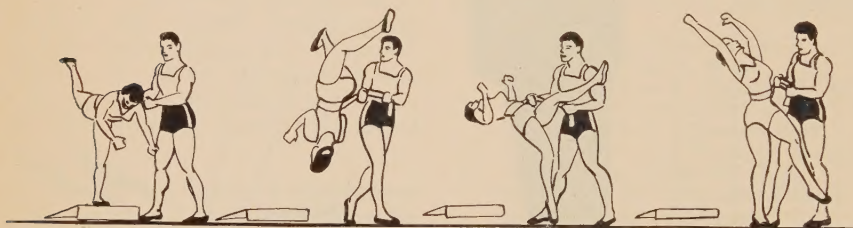
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Place sash around pupil's body and hold both ends together in the middle of pupil's back. For a left cartwheel, stand on left side and hold sash with right hand. For a right cartwheel, stand on right side and hold sash with left hand. Stand a few inches ahead of pupil and both run at the same time. As pupil pushes from board, give a spin with hand holding sash and turn pupil over in the air. At all times stay ahead of pupil. (See page 6 of, "Theory and Practice of Acrobatics and Tumbling".)



25. AERIAL WALKOVER

Place sash around pupil's body and hold both ends of sash on one side of body. If pupil does walkover with left leg forward, stand on left side, holding sash with right hand. For walkover with right leg forward, stand on right side and hold sash with left hand. Stand a few inches ahead of pupil and both run at the same time. As pupil pushes from board, give a spin with hand holding sash and turn pupil over in the air. At all times stay ahead of pupil. (See page 14 of, "Theory and Practice of Acrobatics and Tumbling".)

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